

June 2008

# The Trapline

United States Department of  
Agriculture

Animal & Plant Health  
Inspection Service

Wildlife Services



*Cooperating with:*

Nevada

Department of Agriculture

Division of Resource Protection



## Mission Statement

The Nevada Wildlife Services Program is a collaborative program involving the Nevada Department of Agriculture's Division of Resource Protection (State) and the USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services Program (Federal), whose mission is to protect agricultural, natural resources, property, and the human health and safety of the citizens of Nevada from the threat of injury, damage, or resource loss due to wildlife.

## Introduction

During June, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **7.2** million acres of land under agreement. Additionally, WS assisted **134** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$142,380** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$11,060** in damage to other agricultural resources. During June, coyotes accounted for **\$9,855** in verified losses mostly to livestock and poultry and **284** coyotes were taken with a variety of management methods to resolve these and other ongoing complaints. WS routinely collects blood samples or oral swabs from species taken or handled during normal control activities for monitoring the presence of plague, avian influenza, and other diseases. In June, **92** samples were processed.

*The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of June, 2008.*

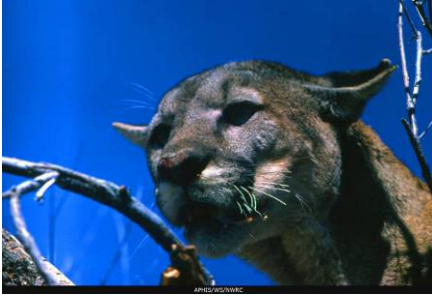
## Resource Protection

### State Office

During June 2008, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **39** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: marmots (**1**), rabbits (**5**), raccoons (**19**), skunks (**4**) and squirrels (**10**). Information regarding baits to use, trap placement tactics, handling of trapped animals and safety precautions to take when working with the wildlife species were provided for all equipment loaned.

**East District**

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, a sheep producer on the Eureka/White Pine County line called Mountain Lion Specialist (MLS) Jim Buhler concerning the loss of four lambs valued at \$400. MLS Buhler and WS Derril Fry responded to the location the following morning. While investigating the situation, MLS Buhler and WS Fry discovered 11 more lambs killed by the lion. The value of the 11 lambs was placed at \$1,100 bring the total loss to \$1,500. MLS Buhler and WS Fry used their hounds to trail the lion. After several hours, the lion was jumped but the dogs could not get the lion cornered. The following morning, the lion was trailed again only to escape the dogs a second time. It became evident to MLS Buhler and WS Fry that the lion was very educated to hounds. The following two days brought very bad weather with an unusual June snow storm that dumped about four to five inches of snow. On June 7<sup>th</sup>, MLS Buhler discovered a wild horse that had been killed by the offending lion. MLS Buhler and WS Fry put their best hounds on the lion and were able to finally bring the lion's killing spree to an end. The lion was an adult male that weighed approximately 145 pounds. The lion was in excellent condition. The lion was skinned and turned over to the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) in Ely. No further losses have occurred. Technical assistance was provided and the area will be monitored by Wildlife Services. The sheep producer was very pleased with MLS Buhler and WS Fry's help.



*WSLH Buhler and WS Fry put their best hounds on the lion and were able to finally bring the lion's killing spree to an end.*

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, WS Matt Spires received a call from a White Pine County sheep producer concerning the loss of 10 lambs and the injury of two lambs. The total value of the damage was placed at \$1,100. WS Spires responded to the location and confirmed that coyotes were responsible for the predation. The coyotes had killed 10 lambs and injured at least two others but did not feed on any of the lamb carcasses. WS Spires removed two adult coyotes by shooting. WS Spires requested the assistance of the airplane. On June 12<sup>th</sup>, the Ely aircraft piloted by Tim Keogh and crew member Jerred Taylor flew the band of sheep that was experiencing the heavy losses. A total of four more coyotes were removed. The White Pine County sheep producer was very pleased with the results provided by WS Spires and the Ely airplane.



On June 12<sup>th</sup>, MLS Jim Buhler received a call from a sheep producer near Ely, Nevada concerning the loss of three lambs to lion predation. The value of the lambs was placed at \$300. On June 13<sup>th</sup>, MLS Buhler traveled to the location and confirmed a lion had killed the lambs. The lion had killed two or three days earlier and had headed North from the location of the damage. MLS Buhler trailed the lion for the next 13 days before finally catching up to it on June 26<sup>th</sup>. During the thirteen day pursuit, MLS jumped the lion twice but was unable to capture it. MLS Buhler reports that most of the lions in the eastern part of the state are extremely educated to hounds and are becoming increasingly difficult to tree. During the hunt for this particular lion, MLS Buhler found at least two deer that had been killed by the lion including an adult doe and its fawn. The sheep producer was very pleased with MLS Buhler and the service pro-

vided by the Wildlife Services program. MLS Buhler will continue to check on the many bands of sheep he protects. As summer continues, most of the sheep will be moving into the higher elevations of eastern Nevada. Historically, lion predation increases as the sheep move higher into the remote mountain areas.

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, WS Scott Little discovered two lambs that had been killed by coyotes. WS Little utilized his horse and his dogs to aid in the removal of one adult coyote and two dens near the damage. No further losses have occurred and the sheep producer is very happy with the service provided by WS Little and the Wildlife Services program.

On June 12<sup>th</sup>, WS Gilbert Temoke received a call concerning the loss of one lamb to coyote predation. WS Temoke traveled to the remote band of sheep in Elko County and confirmed that coyotes had killed the lamb. WS Temoke removed six adult coyotes using traps and snared another adult coyote bringing the damage to an end. The sheep producer was very pleased with WS Temoke's assistance.

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, WS Scott Little received a call from a White Pine County sheep producer concerning the loss of 8 lambs to coyote predation. The value of the lambs was placed at \$1,200. WS Little traveled to the location and confirmed the losses. WS Little utilized his horse and his dogs to remove one adult coyote near the losses. No further predation has been reported and the sheep producer was very pleased with the assistance provided by WS Little.

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the Elko plane piloted by Ken Baer and Wayne Rowley flew NDOW project 19. The project is being conducted at burn locations in Northern Elko County to protect wildlife from predation. After wildfires, deer, antelope and other game species are very vulnerable to predation. During the operation, four coyotes were removed. WS Gary Strader acting as the ground crew for the operation also conducted field necropsies on all four coyotes. Three of the adult coyotes stomach contents revealed deer and the fourth had remains of a sage grouse. The plane reported that all four coyotes were removed near several herds of does with fawns.

On June 25<sup>th</sup>, District Supervisor Joe Bennett conducted a field inspection with WS Gilbert Temoke. Several ranches in Elko County were visited and contact was made with one sheep producer near Copper Basin. The sheep producer was very pleased with WS Temoke's work. Field inspections are an important activity and are conducted with every employee throughout the year.

During June, WS Derril Fry reported the loss of five lambs to coyote predation. WS Fry removed two coyotes with traps, one coyote with snares, three coyotes by shooting and called and shot an additional seven coyotes bringing the damage under control. The Elko plane was also utilized several times in an effort to control the losses.

During June, WS Virgil Fullerton did not have any losses reported in his area. This is a testament to WS Fullerton's hard work. WS Fullerton removed several coyotes during the month. WS Fullerton also ground crewed several times. On June 16<sup>th</sup>, the Ely plane piloted by Tim Keogh and crewmember Jerred Taylor removed 8 coyotes near the sheep. The sheep producer is very happy with WS Fullerton's work ethics and the service provided by Wildlife Services.

During June, WS Gary Strader removed 23 coyotes while working NDOW project 17 in Elko County. WS Strader has removed a total of 332 coyotes this year during the reporting which runs on the Nevada State fiscal year beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 and ending on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. WS Strader has done an excellent job removing coyotes for the protection of deer and elk in hunt units 101, 105, and

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107. The Elko plane piloted by Ken Baer and Crewmember Wayne Rowley also removed several coyotes from the project area. WS Strader as well as many people in the local area have reported a dramatic increase in the number of deer in the area since management activities began four years ago.

During June, WS Bill Fry removed 17 coyotes on NDOW project 14. WS Fry's work area is hunt unit 231. WS Fry utilized calling, trapping and snares to remove the coyotes. WS Fry is concentrating his control activities in and around fawning locations throughout the unit. WS Fry also utilized the Ely plane piloted by Tim Keogh and Crewmember Jerred Taylor to remove several other coyotes from the project area. Work will continue into 2009 on this project.

During June, WS Billy Taylor removed 19 coyotes on NDOW project 15 for the protection of mule deer. The area of control is a portion of hunt unit 222. WS Taylor also utilized the Ely plane piloted by Tim Keogh and Crewmember Jerred Taylor to remove several other coyotes in the project area during June. With another month or so to go on this project, WS Taylor has already surpassed last year's take of coyotes on the six month project.

### West District

During the week of June 2<sup>nd</sup> thru June 6<sup>th</sup>, WS George Hansen has been busy trapping around several sheep bands in Lander and Pershing Counties. WS Hansen has moved up the mountains with the sheep in the summer country, so more time is needed to run equipment in the steep mountains. During the week, WS Hansen removed a total of seven coyotes by method of leghold traps and decoy dogs. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock and keep livestock losses to a minimum.

During the week of June 2<sup>nd</sup> thru June 6<sup>th</sup>, Crew Member Brandon VanderMay assisted several ranchers that were experiencing livestock losses in Humboldt County. During the week CM VanderMay removed a total of four coyotes by method of leghold traps and calling. CM VanderMay is not only a highly skilled aerial gunner but also a good field hand. It's hard to find an employee that can fly a plane, build a plane, trap and call coyotes. CM VanderMay will continue to protect livestock producers in his work area.

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, West District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr., Wildlife Biologists Sam Sanders, Jonathan LaCombe, Zack Bowers and Nevada Department of Wildlife Biologists conducted early morning (4:30 am) Canada goose round-ups at several properties located near a large airport in Reno. A large funnel trap was placed out and the geese were herded into the trap. During the first three weeks of June Canada geese are molting so they are unable to fly. On this particular morning a total of 42 geese were caught. The geese were sexed, banded with a metal leg band and relocated to wildlife management areas in eastern Nevada. Each year the annual goose round-up is a time to capture offending geese to help alleviate the aviation threat and damage that geese cause in the Truckee Meadows area. During the week over 300 Canada geese were captured. DS Spencer and WB Sanders estimate that 500 geese will be caught in the next couple of weeks.

*Wildlife Biologist Sam Sanders and Nevada Department of Wildlife Biologists conducted an early morning (4:30 am) Canada goose round-ups*



During the week of June 2<sup>nd</sup> thru June 6<sup>th</sup>, WS Landon Harris was busy protecting eight lamb bands in north Washoe County. During the week WS Harris found several dead lambs that had been killed by coyotes. Knowing that the lambs were all killed in one area WS Harris roamed the high mountains and made several calling stands throughout the week. During the week WS Harris decoyed in two coyotes and promptly removed both coyotes with shooting. No further livestock losses have been reported.



On June 11<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Ken Baer and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay flew an area in Lander County. A cooperatoer reported that three lambs (valued at \$300) had been killed by coyotes. During the morning flight one coyote was removed near the lamb carcasses. WS Don Capelli provided ground support during aerial operations.

On June 12<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Ken Baer and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay flew two lamb bands in Washoe County. During the early morning hunt a total of three coyotes were removed. WS Landon Harris located one of the coyotes for the aerial crew and directed the plane to the coyote's location. No further livestock losses were reported and these bands of sheep are headed to grazing allotments in California.

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, Pilot Ken Baer and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay flew two sheep bands that were experiencing higher than normal lamb losses in Lander County. The sheep producer reported that recently these remote lamb bands had lamb losses everyday and coyotes were seen on occasion by herders. The aerial crew flew around both lamb bands and in a mere three hours 10 coyotes were removed. WS George Hansen also removed four coyotes by method of leghold traps. No further livestock loses have been reported, since the coyote removal efforts, but WS Hansen will continue to protect these lamb bands on the ground. Our thanks go out to Pilot Baer for providing aerial support to the West District.

On June 16<sup>th</sup>, the annual Reno Goose round-up came to an end. A total of 503 Canada geese were captured. The offending geese were taken by the Nevada Department of Wildlife personnel for relocation to their wildlife management areas in eastern Nevada.

During the week of June 16<sup>th</sup> thru June 20<sup>th</sup>, WS Ben Miller was busy removing coyotes from the Washoe County Mule Deer Project. During the week WS Miller removed a total of five coyotes by method of leghold traps and decoy dogs. WS Miller also checked his mt. lion equipment but since the removal of the last mt. lion some time ago, he has not seen a single mt. lion track in the protection area. In this particular area history has shown that it takes a long time for another mt. lion to move into the country. In some parts of the country it may only take a couple of months for a mt. lion to move into a vacant territory but in areas with low ungulate populations as in western Nevada, it may take nearly a year or more for a new lion to show up. This often seems to be the case in areas where problem mt. lions are removed. WS Miller will continue to protect mule deer in this area.



On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Instructor Pilot Tim Keogh and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay flew a small sheep ranch in Lander County. The sheep producer reported losing several lambs over the course of a week. The aerial crew flew for several hours and removed one coyote. WS Don Capelli provided aerial ground support. WS Capelli will monitor this area for future problems.

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, a large Washoe County airport reported that the mangled remains of a bird were found on the runway. Wildlife Biologist Sam Sanders inspected the dead bird and identified the remains as a red-tailed hawk. No pilots reported hitting the hawk as is often the case since the bird damage is observed where the plane eventually lands.

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, a sheep producer in Washoe County reported that two lambs (valued at \$200) had been killed by coyotes. On June 20<sup>th</sup>, WS Landon Harris just happened to be checking with the herders that morning so he was not far behind the offending coyotes. WS Harris went to the lamb carcasses and howled up a coyote ½ mile away. WS Harris utilized his decoy dog and promptly removed one coyote. WS Harris also removed one den near the location where the coyote was removed. No further livestock losses have been reported.



On June 24<sup>th</sup>, Instructor Pilot Tim Keogh and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay flew two sheep bands in Washoe County. During the morning flight one coyote was removed. This particular livestock producer has had flying from four different aircraft (private and WS) and one helicopter, so coyote damage has been minimal. WS Landon Harris has provided ground support during aerial operations.

On June 25<sup>th</sup> and June 26<sup>th</sup>, Instructor Pilot Tim Keogh and Crew Member Brandon VanderMay flew on the Washoe County Mule Deer Project. During the two day flight, the aerial duo removed eight coyotes. Many of the removed coyotes were in high mountain country but with an expert pilot and gunner they made short work of the coyotes that were located near known mule deer fawning grounds. The air crew observed good populations of mule deer and reported that the deer in this area appeared in excellent shape. WS Ben Miller provided valuable assistance by locating several of the coyotes for the aerial crew. WS Miller will continue to run “long lines” of equipment around mule deer fawning areas. Our thanks go out to Pilot Keogh for providing aerial support to the West District.

During the week of June 23<sup>rd</sup> to June 27<sup>th</sup>, WS Frank Homan was busy trapping high summer ranges in Lyon County. Each week WS Homan removes a coyote or two as they continually move into the area near the sheep. Through nearly 30 years of trapping this area, WS Homan has found that camped out with the sheep provides the best protection efforts. WS Homan will continue to protect these sheep bands before they migrate to California allotments.

On June 28<sup>th</sup>, a livestock producer from Lander County reported that two horses (valued at \$5,000) had been killed by a mt. lion. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, Mt. lion Specialist Tom Kilby inspected the dead horses and confirmed that a large male mt. lion had killed the horses. MLS Kilby rode horseback around the damage site for two days and the offending mt. lion eluded capture but on June 30<sup>th</sup>, the mt. lion returned and after a long hot chase the hounds caught a large 150 pound mt. lion. MLS Kilby promptly removed the offending mt. lion and to date no further livestock losses have been reported. MLS Kilby has world class hunting hounds and not many people can catch mt. lions with dogs when the temperature gets near the century mark. In April, MLS Kilby had removed another male mt. lion



from this same area that was also killing horses. This area has an extremely low mule deer population and it appears that the lions simply kill the next available food source.

On June 20<sup>th</sup> Wildlife Disease Biologist Zack Bowers and Wildlife Biologist Sam Sanders responded to a water treatment facility in Reno. The treatment facility explained that coyotes had taken up residence in the area of a test pond. WDB Bowers and WB Sanders discovered that the coyotes had actually dened up in the pipe lines which are used to transfer water from different areas of the facility into the test pond. Due to the animal carcasses the adults were bringing back to the pups, and the accumulation of coyote feces there were serious sanitary concerns. WDB Bowers and WB Sanders removed five juvenile coyotes from the area. The treatment facility was very cooperative, and expressed appreciation for the Biologist's efforts.

Throughout the month of June, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Shaun Trudell continued desert cottontail rabbit conflict resolution at a local golf resort in Clark County. WS Trudell also received a call regarding a coyote that was acting aggressively toward working dogs at a local golf resort. WS Trudell quickly responded to the call, only minutes after returning home from vacation and removed the coyote. WS Trudell also spent considerable effort responding to reports of an alleged mountain lion that was threatening public safety also at the above location. After interviewing eye witnesses, observing tracks and considerable surveillance, the alleged mountain lion was proved to only be a bobcat.

During the week of June 2<sup>nd</sup>, Assistant District Supervisor (ADS) Jack Sengl and WS Luke Barto began implementing mitigation efforts for common ravens that were congregating in large numbers at a refuse processing site in Clark County. The ravens were causing property damage to structures and equipment, as well as potential for human health and safety risks (i.e. vector). A chemical application of the avicide DRC 1339 was utilized to remove 17 ravens from the location. An additional benefit in removal of the ravens is protection of the endangered desert tortoise and possibly the Rio Grande turkey.

Also during the week of June 2<sup>nd</sup>, WS Luke Barto revisited a wildlife management area, removing 8 common ravens that had preyed upon Rio Grande Turkey chicks and eggs. A chemical application of the avicide DRC 1339 was utilized. Following the removal of ravens, the Nevada Department of Wildlife observed five broods of chicks in the area.



During the week of June 9<sup>th</sup>, ADS Sengl began mitigation efforts for common ravens that were causing property damage and presenting human health and safety risks for a southern Clark County cooperator. A chemical application of the avicide DRC 1339 was used, resulting in the removal of 25 ravens from the location. The management effort should also result in the protection of juvenile desert tortoises that common ravens are prone to prey upon.

Also during the week of June 9<sup>th</sup>, WS Barto assisted the Nevada Department of Wildlife in population surveys of common ravens at several Clark County survey locations.

During the week of June 16<sup>th</sup>, WS Barto monitored and sampled common ravens that had been removed from a southern Clark County location. The samples will be forwarded to the Clark County Health Department for disease monitoring.

During the week of June 16<sup>th</sup>, ADS Sengl returned to a local resort and removed 20 mallard ducks as part of an ongoing translocation effort. The translocation effort aids in: the reduction of potential disease transmission between exotic fowl housed at the resort and wild waterfowl in the area; re-

duced economic loss of feed to wild fowl; and the reduction of exotic brood mortality. Several exotic teal ducklings were killed by one rogue mallard hen prior to the translocation effort.

During the week of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, ADS Sengl returned to a local golf resort after receiving a report of an injured coyote preventing patrons from “teeing off”. ADS Sengl (on his day off) quickly responded to the call then located and removed the problem coyote.

During the week of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, WS Barto revisited a local Clark County resort resulting in the removal of two mallard ducks as part of an ongoing translocation effort.

Also during the week of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, WS Barto set equipment at a local golf resort for brazen coyotes. Though the excessive heat and dynamics of the area (development, blasting, anthropogenic resources, etc.) have presented a formidable challenge, WS Barto has succeeded in removing one problem coyote from the area.

## Developing Methods

Nothing to report.

## Valuing and Investing in People

On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, Matt Jager joined the East District as a new employee. Matt has worked for Wildlife Services in both California and Missouri as a wildlife specialist. Matt will be stationed in Ely and protect livestock in the summer near Ely and work livestock in Lincoln County during the winter months. Matt has a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology from Iowa State University. Matt grew up on a farm in Southern Iowa and has hunted and trapped his entire life. Matt is a very good employee and has taken four coyotes on his summer range during June. Lets all take time to welcome Matt to the Nevada Wildlife Services program.



During the week of June 2-7, Wildlife Disease Biologist Zack Bowers traveled to Fort Collins to participate in necropsy training and oil spill training. During the training WDB Bowers conducted necropsies on ducks, rabbits, rats and mice. This hands on experience was very valuable and will surely help prepare WDB Bowers for real life situations in the field should they arise. The training also included a scenario in which bio-security was practiced. The goal of bio-security is to prevent the spread of the disease agent. The scenario involved everything from an action plan, to movement restrictions, and cleaning and disinfection requirements. It is very advantageous in real life situations that personnel have an understanding of how to practice bio-security. In the past, personnel have arrived at a situation like this and have never even heard of bio-security. The training included clean and dirty zones, and closely resembled a real life situation of a possible disease outbreak.

### Information and Communication

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, Wildlife Biologist Sam Sanders conducted several TV interviews with local channels 2, 4, and 8 about the annual goose round-up. West District Supervisor Jack Spencer Jr. conducted two newspaper interviews about urban geese and the reasons why the goose round-up is conducted each year. The media attention was well received by the public and cooperators were pleased that the geese were gone.



On June 25 State Director Jensen, DS Bennett, and WS Derril Fry attended the N-1 Grazing Board meeting in Elko. SD Jensen updated the Board on the Wildlife Services Program and issues concerning wildlife damage activities in the N-1 Grazing District.

On June 27 and 28, SD Jensen and DS Bennett attended the Nevada Department of Wildlife Commission meeting in Reno. WS also attended the Predation Management sub-committee meeting on Saturday.

### Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to report.

### Future Meetings and Events

The Nevada WS Program will have a State Conference in 2008. The meeting will be held in late August 2008 at Lamoille Canyon in Elko County. The last State Conference was held in Reno in 2006.



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# Wildlife Services

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